

PUBLIC NOTICE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON A DRAFT SUPPLEMENT TO THE RESTORATION PLAN FOR ECOLOGICAL INJURIES (VOLUME I) FOR THE AUGUST 10, 1993 TAMPA BAY OIL SPILL

Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 2706(c)(5) and 15 C. F.R. 990.55, notice is hereby given that a document entitled "Draft Supplement to the Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment (DARP/EA) for the August 10, 1993 Tampa Bay Oil Spill, Volume I – Ecological Injuries" (Draft Supplement is available for public review and comment. This document was prepared by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior (collectively, the 'Trustees') to amend the restoration plan for the lost beach sand which resulted from the August 1993 Tampa Bay oil spill- The Draft Supplement considers additional alternatives for use to restore beach sand lost due to the spill, proposes to include two new restoration alternatives in the restoration plan for this resource injury, and also identifies specific projects which are currently considered to be eligible for funding consistent with the newly proposed alternatives. Restoration actions which are finally approved following the public review and comment period announced today will be implemented using funds that the Trustees recovered for the physical loss of beach sand as part of a settlement of federal and state natural resource damage claims arising from the spill.

On August 10, 1993, approximately 32,000 gallons of mixed light fuels and 330,000 gallons of #6 fuel oil were discharged into the Tampa Bay environment following collisions involving three vessels near the entrance to Tampa Bay, Florida. The spill and/or associated response actions resulted in injury to a variety of natural resources, including birds, sea turtles, mangroves, seagrasses, salt marshes, oyster beds, surface waters, sediments and beaches, and significantly disrupted the use of area waterways, beaches and shellfish beds for public recreation. The physical loss of beach sand is one of nine types of natural resource injuries identified assessed, and for which a restoration plan was adopted by the Trustees in the DARP/EA Vol. I

The physical loss of beach sand occurred as a result of necessary response actions. Much of the oil from the spill eventually stranded on about 13 linear miles of the beaches on the Pinellas County barrier islands. Cleanup of the oil on these beaches resulted in the removal of an estimated 39,827 cubic yards of oiled sand. As specified in Section 4.9 of the DARP/EA Vol. I, damages for the physical loss of beach sand were assessed based on cost of replacing the same volume of beach sand as was removed as part of a routine public sand nourishment project in the affected area. Damages for the physical sand loss recovered in May 1999 as part of a comprehensive settlement of State and Federal claims arising from the spill.

The restoration plan adopted in the DARP/EA Vol. I for the physical sand loss included only one restoration alternative for use to achieve sand replacement: the direct replacement of beach sand with offshore dredged sand, through augmentation of a current or future local, permitted beach nourishment. Since settlement, the Trustees have diligently searched but have not found a

restoration project opportunity which is consistent with the DARP/EA Vol I as all identified nourishment plans for area beaches have sources of necessary funds identified and/or are already planned at capacity. Therefore, the Trustees find it necessary to identify other restoration actions appropriate to provide for beach sand restoration using the available beach sand restoration funds consistent with OPA

This notice invites interested members of the public to review and comment on the Draft Supplement within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice. Such comments may include identification of other restoration alternatives or projects for achieving beach sand replacement which may be appropriate for consideration by the Trustees in amending the restoration plan for the beach sand loss. Where other restoration alternatives or projects are identified for consideration, commentors are encouraged to include information addressing the selection criteria set forth in Section 2.1 of the Draft Supplement and indicate whether such alternatives or projects are eligible for matching funds from other sources. Electronic copies of the proposed plan may be obtained online at: <http://www.darp.noaa.gov/>. Copies of the proposed plan may be requested from the NOAA Restoration Center - Southeast Region, ATTN: John Iliff, 9721 Executive Center Drive, N., Suite 120, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 or 727-570-5390 by fax. Comments on the proposed plan are to be submitted in writing to that same address/fax location. All written comments received within the comment period will be considered by the Trustees prior to adopting a final amended restoration plan for the lost beach sand.